

COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT LAWS OF CHESS FINALISED IN TALLINN

By Stewart Reuben

We received comments from many people from all over the world and had extensive discussions in Tallinn. All changes are now marked in yellow. This is to enable people to see the changes and may be helpful for people translating the Laws into other languages.

Most changes are 'cosmetic'. That is they are just rewording of existing articles. Some are more radical. Some of these have been occasioned by the changing situation in chess, particularly regarding cheating. Some have been introduced by members of the FIDE Presidential Board who had the objective of making rapidplay and blitz more like standard play and each other. They wish also to discourage quickplay finishes, so the Laws for this type of chess have been moved out of the main articles to an Appendix.

Below are my comments *in italics* on the radical changes.

7.5a last sentence. The pawn shall be replaced by a queen of the same colour as the pawn.

This situation often arises. It is better to insist it be a queen. A player, short of time, might put the pawn on the last rank and press the clock. While the arbiter is giving the opponent an extra two minutes, the player can decide which promotion is actually best.

7.5b b. ...for the second completed illegal move by the same player the arbiter shall declare the game lost by this player.

In the current Laws a player is allowed to make two illegal moves.

9.6 If one or both of the following occur(s) then the game is drawn:

- a. the same position has appeared, as in 9.2b, for at least five consecutive alternate moves by each player.
- b. the last 75 moves have been completed by each player without the movement of any pawn and without any capture.

This avoids players repeating positions continually or carrying on and on with no capture or a pawn move. 9.2 and 9.3 each require a claim. 9.6 means the game is over and the arbiter must step in. People have asked what happens if it is overlooked and the game terminates in other than a draw afterwards. This is solved as appropriate by Articles 5.1, 5.2 a, b, c and 8.7. The main concern is not to prolong games on a tight schedule.

11.3b. During play, a player is forbidden to have a mobile phone and/or other electronic means of communication in the playing venue. If it is evident that a player brought such a device into the playing venue, he shall lose the game. The opponent shall win. The rules of a competition may specify a different, less severe, penalty. The arbiter may require the player to allow his clothes, bags or other items to be inspected, as in airport screening in private. The arbiter, or a person authorised by the arbiter, shall inspect the player and shall be of the same gender as the player. If a

player refuses to cooperate with these obligations, the arbiter shall take measures in accordance with Article 12.10.

*Electronic cheating has become very troublesome. For games played in the absence of an arbiter it is impossible to forfeit a player when his phone rings. There are other reasons a competition may wish to specify a less severe penalty. Note, it only states the arbiter **may** require...*

It is possible this Law may require amendment next year in Tromso in the light of further developments.

Rapidplay and Blitz

The rates of play have now been adjusted so that 5 minutes + 5 seconds becomes blitz.

- A.3 The Competition Rules shall apply if
- a. one arbiter supervises at most three games and
 - b. each game is recorded by the arbiter or his assistant and, if possible, by electronic means.

*For the competition rules to apply, **both** a and b must be followed.*

- A.4 Otherwise the following apply:
- a. From the initial position, once ten moves have been completed by each player,
 - (1) no change can be made to the clock setting, unless the schedule of the event would be adversely affected.
 - (2) no claim can be made regarding incorrect set-up or orientation of the chessboard. In case of incorrect king placement, castling is not allowed. In case of incorrect rook placement, castling with this rook is not allowed.
 - b. An illegal move is completed once the player has pressed his clock. If the arbiter observes this he shall declare the game lost by the player, provided the opponent has not made his next move. If the arbiter does not intervene, the opponent is entitled to claim a win, provided the opponent has not made his next move. However, the game is drawn if the position is such that the opponent cannot checkmate the player's king by any possible series of legal moves. If the opponent does not claim and the arbiter does not intervene, the illegal move shall stand and the game shall continue. Once the opponent has made his next move, an illegal move cannot be corrected unless this is agreed by the players without intervention of the arbiter.
 - c. To claim a win on time, the claimant must stop the chessclock and notify the arbiter. For the claim to be successful, the claimant must have time remaining on his own clock after the chessclock has been stopped. However, the game is drawn if the position is such that the opponent cannot checkmate the player's king by any possible series of legal moves.
 - d. If the arbiter observes both kings are in check, or a pawn on the rank furthest from its starting position, he shall wait until the next move is

completed. Then, if the illegal position is still on the board, he shall declare the game drawn.

It is thought ten moves is more realistic than three, especially for increments.

An illegal move loses in both rapidplay and blitz.

If the arbiter comes upon a game he shall intervene if both kings are in check, or a pawn has not been changed after promotion. He must wait until the player has moved and pressed his clock. Prior to that, the player might have corrected the situation or claimed a win. Other types of illegal positions are less immediately obvious.

A.5 The Rules for a competition shall specify whether Article A.3 or Article A.4 shall apply for the entire event

B.2 The penalties mentioned in Articles 7 and 9 of the Competition Rules shall be one minute instead of two minutes.

Two minutes in five is thought to be too great a penalty. The irregularities are not restricted to illegal moves. For example, it is possible to claim threefold occurrence of position where there is adequate supervision.

B.3 The Competition Rules shall apply if

- a. one arbiter supervises one game and
- b. each game is recorded by the arbiter or his assistant and/or electronic means.

B.4 Otherwise, play shall be governed by the Rapidplay Laws as in Appendix A.4.

B.5 The Rules for a competition shall specify whether Article B.3 or Article B.4 shall apply for the entire event.

Appendix G. Quickplay finish.

This has been moved to an Appendix. It is hoped that, as mechanical clocks are phased out, these will become less and less common.

G.2 Before the start of an event it shall be announced whether this Appendix shall apply or not.

G.3 This Appendix shall only apply to standard play and rapidplay games without increment and not to blitz games.

G.4 If the player having the move has less than two minutes left on his clock, he may request that a time delay or cumulative time of an extra five seconds be introduced for both players, if possible. The clocks shall then be set with the extra time; the opponent shall be awarded two extra minutes and the game shall continue.

Currently all FIDE rated standard play games without an increment are played with a quickplay finish.

G4 introduces a new idea, mainly for events that have access only to a few digital clocks. This is to introduce an increment when it is requested and it is possible. That avoids the need for G5, heretofore 10.2.

Glossary

This has been requested several times. It is outside the Laws of Chess and thus not an Appendix. It is a living document that should be changed as and when necessary. The Laws can normally only be changed every four years.